



Photo: UN Women/Bashar Al-Jabari

OVERVIEW: WOMEN COUNT PHASE II ARAB STATES

The issue

When the Arab States Women Count regional project began in 2023, the region faced several gender statistics challenges:

- There was a need for stronger political will to step up the collection and dissemination of gender indicators in data production processes in all national statistical systems (NSSs).
- Data on gender disparities were of common interest in the Arab States, but comprehensive gender statistics were not available for many economic and social issues in all countries, making it difficult to measure progress towards gender-related Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets.
- There was a strong regional need for further analysis of data on women's economic empowerment (WEE), violence against women (VAW), and women in peace, security and humanitarian action. However, the lack of legal frameworks and policies on the production of gender statistics, coupled with limited awareness of their importance for gender equality, posed major challenges.

Our response

- **Create an enabling environment:** UN Women supported countries in conducting assessments on the status of gender statistics; developed action plans and statistical laws; provided capacity-building support; improved legal and institutional arrangements for the production and use of gender statistics; adapted UN Women's gender statistics training modules to the Arab States' context; and strengthened regional partnerships to produce knowledge products and build capacities..

- **Increase data production:** UN Women supported national data collection in key areas, like humanitarian action and collaborated with various organizations to monitor and report on regional progress towards the SDGs.
- **Improve data accessibility and use:** It created knowledge products, including reports and data visualizations, to highlight key findings from data-collection exercises and disseminate these through multiple channels to increase awareness; enhanced the capacity of media outlets to use gender data for policy formulation and advocacy; created a regional forum to link data production and use, facilitating exchange between data producers and decision-makers; and prepared a communications strategy for the programme.

Where we work

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Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Yemen.

countries

Key results

Creating an enabling environment

- **UN Women strengthened gender data systems across the Arab States region, generating measurable results at national and regional levels.** In Tunisia, the National Statistics Office (NSO), with support from the Women Count programme, developed the country's first comprehensive [Action Plan for Gender-Sensitive Statistics](#). The plan identifies gender data gaps across development sectors, outlines the surveys and censuses needed to fill them, sets timelines and assigns institutional responsibilities. The Action Plan was developed to address the lack of gender mainstreaming in Tunisia's National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (2024–2026), creating a structured approach to institutionalize gender statistics and strengthen SDG monitoring. It directly enabled the production of a [gender flash](#) based on Action Plan indicators, supporting more evidence-based, gender-responsive decision-making.
- **At the regional level, UN Women's advocacy contributed to the prioritization of, and improved intergovernmental coordination on, gender statistics.** At the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) Statistical Committee session in October 2024, Member States adopted [two major recommendations](#) on strengthening gender statistics and expanding UN support to NSOs for SDG monitoring. This marks a significant milestone in elevating gender data as a regional priority. UN Women's presentation on existing gender statistics gaps – such as the fact that only 39.5% of gender-related SDG indicators were available as of 2024 – surprised Member States and development partners and helped shape the inclusion of gender data related recommendations. UN Women also played a key role in regional data coordination meetings led by ESCWA, presenting findings from the *2024 Gender Snapshot* and supporting multi-agency efforts to strengthen data ecosystems across the region and reduce duplication by sharing planned activities.
- **At least 179 officials from 17 countries across the Arab region now have strengthened capacities to produce and analyse gender data.** This includes statisticians from NSOs,

staff from gender machineries and civil registration systems who took part in UN Women-supported trainings from 2023–2025.

- 17 statisticians from nine countries strengthened their understanding of time-use survey methodologies, including the measurement of supervisory care, in 2023. Following the training, **Morocco** committed to conduct a stand-alone time-use survey, while **Jordan** and **Egypt** expressed interest in integrating time-use modules into labour force surveys – important steps towards improving the measurement of unpaid care work under SDG 5.4.1. Jordan has since done this and produced a special report in 2025 on gender differences in time use, based on data drawn from its labour force survey.
- 20 officials from **Bahrain** strengthened their capacities to collect data to track SDG 5 indicators in 2024 and have since informed a coordinated plan to increase SDG 5 data availability.
- 61 officials across 14 countries strengthened their skills in generating and harmonizing marriage and divorce data through civil registration and vital statistics systems, with resulting regional recommendations emphasizing the need for standardized data collection, digitization, legal reforms, and stronger cooperation among UN agencies and national partners.
- 25 statisticians from 11 NSOs across the Arab States region strengthened their capacity to produce gender-specific SDG indicators using global metadata standards and support policymaking through a training provided by the UN Women Arab States Regional Office (ASRO), together with ESCWA and the League of Arab States (LAS) in Cairo in May 2025. Post-workshop evaluations revealed an average 95% satisfaction rate with the workshop objectives and a 93% rating of participants' ability to transfer the acquired knowledge to colleagues. According to participant Amani Daoud Hamad Judeh, Head of Gender Statistics at the Department of Statistics of Jordan: *"The training on gender-related SDG indicators, which was delivered by a UN Women expert, was very important – especially as we are currently preparing the third national voluntary report. The content was clear and the examples provided helped convey the information quickly."*
- 56 statisticians from 17 countries learned to analyse population and housing census data through a gender lens and to produce Gender Thematic Reports for countries planning to undertake population and housing censuses at a regional workshop organized by ESCWA, the United Nations Population Fund and the Gulf Cooperation Council, with contributions from UN Women, in Amman in May 2025. As a result of the technical support provided, a comprehensive tabulation plan for the Gender Thematic Report was developed for the **Jordan** Population and Housing Census. This plan incorporates expanded gender-responsive indicators, including newly proposed variables such as land ownership and bank account ownership. These additions were recommended for integration into the census questionnaire to strengthen the measurement and visibility of gender-related disparities.

Increasing data production

- **SDG monitoring and accelerated progress on SDG gender data availability has significantly improved across the Arab region.** The [Handbook on the Arab Gender Indicator Framework](#), produced by ESCWA with support from UN Women in 2023, strengthened SDG monitoring across the region and served as a key technical input for the development of the first-ever regional [SDGs Gender Snapshot](#). The handbook provided a comprehensive set of 115 gender-sensitive indicators helping to harmonize approaches and improve comparability of gender statistics for SDG reporting. Building on its foundation, the *SDGs Gender Snapshot*, developed by UN Women in partnership with

ESCWA, and launched at the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development in April 2025, provides the first consolidated regional baseline on gendered SDG progress and serves a reference for advocacy, programming and monitoring across the region. According to Nevein Nagy, Demographic and Biostatistics Expert at the League of Arab States: *“The findings from the SDG Gender Snapshot informed the organization of capacity-building for NSOs across the region in gender data production by LAS and UN Women to fill the gaps in data availability for SDG implementation and reporting, especially as only 39.5% of SDG gender-specific indicators have data available in 2024, as highlighted by the report.”* The Snapshot’s influence extended beyond technical stakeholders into global public discourse. At least 19 media outlets covered its launch or findings, with [CNN Arabic](#) featuring its key findings in April 2025, significantly expanding the visibility of gender data and elevating policy messages on the urgency of accelerating progress within the remaining five years of the 2030 Agenda. This media engagement reflects a growing regional recognition of gender data as a driver of accountability and action. In addition, the Snapshot garnered wide social media attention, with more than 40,000 views across four platforms and engagement through use of the #genderdata hashtag reaching more than 36,000 people.

- **New data on how women and girls are affected by the war in Gaza have shaped humanitarian operations and ensured that assistance reaches those most in need.** These efforts were all guided by a rapid gender assessment (RGA) in 2023 and four Gender Alerts (on [gendered impacts](#); [water, sanitation and hygiene](#); [women-led organizations](#); and [women’s health](#) in 2024, and a [Gender Snapshot for the Gaza Strip](#) published in 2025 – all produced by UN Women with Women Count’s technical and financial support. They provided real-time data and analysis documenting the evolving situation for women and girls, which served as an authoritative foundation for informed, inclusive and responsive humanitarian programming. Data from the first RGA in Gaza in late 2023 shaped [UN Women’s six-month humanitarian response plan](#) and informed the new World Food Programme (WFP) partnership. The data were also used in project proposals that have since been supported by donors, such as a [project to support displaced women and girls in Palestine funded by Japan](#) in 2025. Together, these results reflect a coherent, rights-based and data-driven humanitarian response that remained inclusive, survivor-centred and grounded in accountability, despite severe operational constraints. This life-saving assistance contributed to strengthening resilience and upholding rights for Gaza’s most vulnerable. This evidence-driven approach contributed to directly reaching at least 400,147 Palestinians (predominantly displaced women and girls) across Gaza and the West Bank from 2023–2025 – including 195,923 individuals specifically in Gaza – with food and non-food assistance, shelter, essential protection, legal aid, cash assistance and/or other life-saving support. This included:
 - 193,770 individuals (including 71,674 individuals in Gaza alone – 61,339 of which were women and girls) who received protection and VAW-related services in 2024–2025 through UN Women-supported humanitarian responses. These services included case management, referrals, psychological first aid, mental health and psychosocial support, awareness-raising, women-led community initiatives and documentation of human rights violations. In conditions marked by acute insecurity and trauma, these services were indispensable in restoring safety, dignity and psychosocial stability.
 - 82,851 people who received legal aid services in 2023–2025 (including 18,653 people in Gaza – 17,511 of which were women and girls), ensuring that women and crisis-affected families had pathways to justice and redress. This support recognized and addressed the escalating legal vulnerabilities – including family separation, documentation loss, property disputes and restrictions on mobility.
 - 40,505 individuals (including 30,004 in Gaza alone – 21,390 of which were women and girls) who were reached through women’s leadership and

participation efforts. Understanding that conflict conditions significantly limit women's participation in decision-making, women were empowered through community forums, advocacy efforts, public events, training programmes and contributions to national strategy processes, to shape community priorities and engage meaningfully in humanitarian coordination, even amid the collapse of civic infrastructure.

- 30,573 individuals (28,949 in Gaza – 22,336 of which were women and girls) who were reached directly in 2025 through awareness-raising activities and others to expand access to information on available humanitarian services and multisectoral referrals, as well as by sharing feedback through safe hotline channels.
- 15,600 people in Gaza alone who received food assistance between 2023 and 2025 through a UN Women-WFP partnership. As Marika Guderian, Deputy Country Director for WFP in Palestine put it: *“The partnership with UN Women has really allowed us to have that granular level of data and understanding and specifically, based on that data, target female-headed households.”*
- 27,146 Palestinians in 2023–2025 – including 16,420 women and 3,180 children reached in Gaza in 2024 alone – who received other emergency non-food items (including Protection Dignity Kits, clothing packages, health and hygiene kits) through partnerships with the Egyptian Red Crescent, Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization and UN Women Country Offices in Egypt and Jordan.
- 6,828 women and girls (2,278 in Gaza in 2025 alone) who benefited from complementary emergency cash assistance (including multi-purpose cash assistance and cash-for-protection), enabling families to cover critical expenses in a context of widespread economic collapse and displacement. Other livelihood assistance, including skills-development and cash-for-work opportunities, were provided to 1,851 women in Gaza in 2024.
- 2,874 individuals (1,966 in Gaza alone) who were targeted through assessments, mapping and institutional support for local partners, including training, follow up and collaboration.
- These totals include 13,156 people with disabilities (including 7,845 reached in Gaza alone) in 2024–2025, demonstrating a sustained and deliberate commitment to reaching those with heightened protection risks.
- And in addition to the direct beneficiaries above, another 700,000 Palestinians were reached indirectly through awareness-raising and information campaigns, gender-responsive humanitarian coordination and the strengthening of referral systems.

Improving data use

- **Yemen conducted the first comprehensive gender analysis examining the gendered impacts of the ongoing conflict is shaping humanitarian programming and response efforts.** The analysis assessed women's access to economic resources, healthcare, education and decision-making, and reviewed the prevalence of gender-based violence alongside barriers to essential protection services. It further evaluated women's participation in leadership, governance and peacebuilding processes and identified key constraints to economic inclusion and financial empowerment. The [findings](#), published in November 2025, generated actionable, evidence-based recommendations to strengthen gender-responsive humanitarian programming and policy development. The data have

been cited, and the analysis informed the upcoming UN Common Country Assessment for Yemen. It also supported UN Women programme and humanitarian proposal development aimed at shaping responses that prioritize the needs and rights of women and girls.

- **[GenTrack Phase II](#)** – UN Women’s regional gender data portal for the Arab States – has evolved from a quantitative monitoring tool into a more robust, context-sensitive and qualitative analytical system. Building on UN Women’s Gender Justice and Equality Before the Law initiative, in 2025 UN Women introduced a new “qualitative trends” component that complements GenTrack’s quantitative indicators. This integration deepens understanding of progress on women’s economic empowerment (18 indicators) and women’s political empowerment (3 indicators) by linking statistical trends with qualitative insights drawn from legislation, policy reforms and institutional developments across 17 Arab States. These insights – which cover areas such as political violence against women, maternity and paternity leave, equal pay, sexual harassment redress and non-discrimination in employment – enhance user interpretation of quantitative trends and expand the availability of contextualized data in Arabic. Methodologies were also developed to systematically gather and analyse political, socioeconomic and institutional factors affecting gender equality outcomes, including through data mining and web scraping of events such as elections, reforms, conflicts and leadership transitions. Structured repositories were created for countries in the Arab region where political and socioeconomic events were mapped against GenTrack’s full set of 194 indicators, while in-depth legal research across 15 countries assessed legislative alignment with international gender equality standards. For example, in **Saudi Arabia**, [GenTrack analysis](#) revealed that female labour force participation experienced a remarkable surge between 2018–2025, more than doubling from roughly 17% in 2017 to over 35% in 2023, following the adoption of the Law eliminating restrictions on women’s ability to work in jobs deemed dangerous in 2020, the lifting of the driving ban and relaxation of guardianship laws in 2017, and the effects of the Prohibition of gender discrimination in employment law adopted in 2019, Prohibition of dismissal of pregnant workers law adopted in 2019, reforms and programmes related to supporting working women and job-seekers and the Labour Market Strategy including enhancing women economic participation, etc. The platform, launched in 2023 and now hosting 194 indicators, continues to grow in scope and utility, with 30,876 views recorded in 2023–2025 and an average user engagement time of 4 minutes.

Plans for Phase III

In Phase IIIⁱ, Women Count in the Arab States will focus on strengthening gender-responsive data systems, closing persistent data gaps in key areas such as women’s economic empowerment, and improving the use of gender data for decision-making. It will deepen regional cooperation and country support to build sustainable statistical systems aligned with SDG monitoring needs. It will also prioritize translating data into actionable insights to inform policies and investments for

gender equality. Specific interventions will include:

- Strengthen regional coordination and institutional frameworks for gender statistics through partnerships with ESCWA, LAS, Gulf Cooperation Council, Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics and UN agencies.
- Develop a regional gender statistics strategy and support countries (e.g. Jordan, Morocco, Palestine, etc.) to integrate gender priorities into statistical laws, national strategies and action plans.

- Roll out a regional training curriculum on gender statistics and expand collaboration with academic institutions, alongside developing guidance on administrative and citizen-generated data.
- Provide targeted technical support to priority countries to strengthen gender data systems and institutional capacity.
- Support national surveys and data collection efforts – including time-use, labour force and household surveys – to address critical gender data gaps and inform economic and social policies.
- Expand the availability of data on violence against women through integration into existing surveys, dedicated data collection, and methodological work on emerging forms such as technology-facilitated violence.
- Strengthen data accessibility and use through analytical products (eg: *SDG Gender Snapshot*, etc.), an expanded regional Community of Practice, and enhanced platforms such as the GenTRACK dashboard to support evidence-based policymaking.

ⁱ Plans for Phase III are in the process of being finalized and are subject to the availability of funding.